



CRDAMC Now

Initiatives to improve your health care

Carl R. Darnall
Army Medical Center

Fort Hood, Texas
February 2009

What's new?

Women's Health Symposium— The Circle of Life

Over 50 guest speakers, with four tracks, including Child-bearing, Behavioral Health, Diseases, and Wellness. At the Fort Hood Education Center, Feb. 27 from 9 a.m.—4 p.m.

Open Enrollment
Change your TRICARE enrollment from your local civilian doctor to a primary care provider at one of Darnall's clinics: Bennett Health Clinic, Thomas Moore Health Clinic, or the new, state-of-the-art-clinic, located on West Fort Hood (to be named at a later date). Visit the TRICARE Service Center across from the main entrance to Darnall.

Hood Howdy
Be sure to send all your newly arrived Soldiers and Families to the Healthy Living Fair at Hood Howdy, Feb. 11, Club Hood, from 10 a.m.—2 p.m. Darnall will have representatives from Army Public Health Nursing, Health Promotion, Population Health, Nutrition Care, Fisher House, and other departments.

Bennett Health Clinic QuickCare
Enrollees to Bennett Health Clinic can walk-in for prompt treatment of minor injuries and sudden illnesses Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.—5 p.m.

CRDAMC's Commander: 2009 will bring significant changes

Col. Casper P. Jones III, commander of Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center, took the opportunity Jan. 16 to give an "All Hands" briefing to staff and employees about the challenges and success of the medical center and about changes and improvements in store.

"We're making great progress—be proud of that," Jones told the packed auditorium. Those staff and employees who could not leave their duty stations could view the presentation from their desktop computers and from televisions in waiting rooms.

Jones said it was a good financial year, with Resource Management executing a budget of \$259.2M, which was a 14 percent increase over fiscal year 2007.

"This was a tremendous fiscal year for us—finances fuel everything we do. We identified needs and requirements to take care of our beneficiaries," Jones said.

He told the crowd, "Be what you want to be. CRDAMC takes care of its own, too." Jones said everyone who applied for a residency or fellowship was selected. Twelve staff members will go onto higher education in a variety of medical fields.

Recapitalization, or building a new hospital at Fort Hood, was the topic of great



est interest to the staff, especially those who have been at Darnall since it was built in 1964 and renovated in 1984.

At the moment, the first phase of a hospital replacement is programmed in the 2012 budget. The second phase is not yet programmed.

Darnall lacks specialist for comprehensive care, so local civilian hospitals provide advanced diagnostic and health-care.

"A new facility would improve services, access, and the quality of healthcare for beneficiaries," Jones said.

New facilities currently

under construction include a Women's Health Center, new dining facility, renovation of the North Fort Hood Clinic, and renovation of an operating room.

The number of staff and employees jumped from 2,543 in July 2007 to the current 2,969, a whopping 17 percent increase in 18 months. During that time, Darnall converted 252 contract positions to Federal civil service jobs.

"And tell your friends we are still hiring," Jones said. The hospital currently has

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391 open civil service positions, primarily in behavioral health, family medicine, nursing, and pharmacy. There are also openings for 108 contract positions in behavioral health, neurosurgery, endocrinology, gastroenterology, and podiatry.

"It's important to staff for a world-class medical center capable of providing world-class health care," Jones said, "but it also important that all of you are happy, resourced, and satisfied, or it doesn't work."

Jones congratulated many departments for innovations, increasing access to care, and improving their battle space,

but said the way to find the "pot of gold" was to meet patients' expectations.

CRDAMC's way ahead to the pot of gold includes several initiatives:

- Making sure CRDAMC is funded for the appropriate level of healthcare while practicing good stewardship of tax payers' dollars;
- Automating the MEB Clinic;
- Expanding behavioral health resources through staffing and building a center of excellence at Fort Hood;
- Establishing a 24-bed substance abuse intensive outpatient program and transforming it into an inpatient substance abuse residential facility;

- Maximizing efficiencies with automated systems and staff and employees' ideas;

- Addressing hospital flow issues and staffing that affect length of stay, wait time, and customer satisfaction; and

- Reorganizing administrative areas.

"We're focused on making CRDAMC a world-class health center," Jones said. "We're taking care of our soldiers and we need to take care of their Families too. Lots of Soldiers and their Families are at risk; they're traumatized and having difficulty coping. While we've improved patient care and access, it's not enough. We need to stay focused on patient care. It's part of our promise to our beneficiaries."

New outreach team represents Soldiers in MEB



Soldiers undergoing a Medical Evaluation Board are sometimes overwhelmed with decisions and options that may affect the rest of their lives, and a new outreach team makes sure they get the legal counseling they need to make the appropriate decisions.

"A memorandum of agreement between The Judge Advocate General (TJAG) and The Surgeon General (TSG) established legal positions at 18 posts throughout the Army to make sure legal services are available to MEB Soldiers," said Linda Webster, a retired Army lawyer and now legal advocate for Soldiers..

At Fort Hood, Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center and III Corps Staff Judge Advocate Office combined efforts to put together a team of two outreach attorneys and a senior paralegal to serve the biggest post in the Army.

"Fort Hood is the only post with two civilian outreach attorneys and a paralegal," beamed Webster, who was assigned to CRDAMC while on active duty. "That's a big plus for our Soldiers; they don't have to wait in long lines to get legal advice," added Webster.

"A Soldier's biggest concern is continuity," said Steve Hess, the other outreach attorney and a retired Army lawyer. "They don't want to explain their situation over and over again. With the three of us serving only the MEB, they can be assured we are familiar with their case."

Both Webster and Hess emphasize that they represent the Soldier's interests, not the Army. Webster's background in medical law at CRDAMC, and Hess' background with the Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) in San Antonio make

them well versed and highly qualified to represent our Soldiers' best interests.

"The legal team works for the individual Soldier to ensure that his or her rights are protected and that a fair assessment of the Soldier's medical condition is rendered and documented during the MEB process," said Vickie Kuk, a paralegal and the third member of the outreach team. Kuk is a certified paralegal with over 25 years of experience assisting Soldiers.

Kuk said the team works to make sure the Soldier gets all benefits to which he or she is entitled by working with various commands, organizations, and individuals on and off Fort Hood

"We explain the process and the Soldier's options during the process so that they can make informed decision about whether to stay in the Army or get out," added Hess. We should be their first point of contact, if they have any questions about the MEB process."

The MEB Outreach Office is in building 4617, at the corner of 72nd St. and Santa Fe Drive. Hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Soldiers who have received MEB findings or those who have received an informal finding and recommendation from the PEB have priority.

The legal team can provide Soldiers in the MEB process with general legal assistance to help resolve personal legal matters other than criminal actions.

"We prefer that Soldiers make an appointment by calling 287-9409, but we will make every effort to see a Soldier on a walk-in basis, if needed," Kuk said.



Linda Webster (top) and Steve Hess (bottom) are new outreach attorneys for Soldiers undergoing the MEB.